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Statement submitted by Equidad de Genero: Ciudadania, Trabajo y Familia, A.C., a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.

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Statement

The challenge of the Century: An integrated approach for sustainable development in a healthy and equal world

The 2030 Agenda is a reality. Its implementation faces major challenges; one of the greatest being how to integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development while respecting, promoting and guaranteeing human rights. In this context, work is a relevant dimension. Work is one of the foundations of human societies; it is not only a means for production but it is also the basis for the development of personal capacities and abilities. Our current societies are based on paid work as a catalyst for economic development. However, for the world we want to live in, where healthy and equal work are paramount, the role of unpaid domestic and care work must be a cross-cutting element considered in every sector and policy.

In the context of paid work, women's traditional roles that demand that they undertake the care of children pose an obstacle for them to access formal employment, maintain full-time work or obtain decision-making positions. Because of this, women are more constrained, maintaining their productive activities in informal sectors, which impedes their economic and social mobility. Evidently, this alienates them from the action of states and narrows their access to social protection and better conditions for personal development. Despite the constant increase of the number of women in the productive field, the Latin American and the Caribbean region presents one of the lowest rates of participation of women in the workforce, with the only exception being Africa. According to UN-Women, in the Latin American and the Caribbean region, women represented 54% of the total workforce in 2013, and statistics from 2010 show that 59% of women were employed in the informal sector (ECLAC, 2010). Despite the efforts of governments in the region, with the burden of unpaid domestic and care work, women are working more hours than men: 53.63 hours per week, most of it unpaid. This situation is more critical when disaggregated by race, age, geographical condition and others. The gender pay gap remains practically the same as 15 years ago (15% on average), and access to social protection is scarce, at times amounting to only one third of what men receive. It is clear that structural transformations are needed in order to guarantee gender equality.

With regards to Means of Implementation, the microeconomic dimension of unpaid domestic and care work has to play a key role. At the state level, a fiscal shift needs to take place so that taxation and expenditure consider the important implications of differences in time use in the lives of women and men over their lifetimes. Gender responsive budgeting, a tool agreed in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda as one of the main components to achieve gender equality and to guarantee women's human rights, should aim to progressively cover social sectors as well as the environmental and economic sectors. Gender budgeting should be used as a tool to implement Goal 9 which aims to: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation, will enable a change in daily life so that responsibility for unpaid domestic care work is shared by the state, the private sector, communities, families, men and women. Similarly, in promoting safe and inclusive cities, as referred to in Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements

inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable, the far distribution of time use revolutionizes the way we conceive and use space.

The current distribution of time use is related to the sexual division of labour. It is necessary to eliminate this division so that women are included in the most expansive way possible to promote a transition towards an economy based on zero fossil fuels as stated in Goal 7: ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all. Women should not only be considered as consumers of energy, but rather be at the centre of management and decision-making about energy and in the planning of large-scale projects. Here, capacity building for women will play a key role, as it is necessary to reduce the inequality gap in scientific and technological fields. Consideration of access to technology, as well as the recognition of traditional technologies that are more sustainable and respectful of the environment, should be included throughout the Sustainable Development Goals implementation stages.

Integrated implementation highlights the links between fields that we have not seen in the past. Time use and unpaid domestic and care work is an effective point of entry to articulate the three dimensions of sustainable development and tackle its obstacles while promoting more comprehensive measures. For instance, the impacts of the Zika crisis will fall upon the shoulders of women who are largely responsible for the care of the elderly, the chronically ill and people with disabilities, as the crisis will increase the number of people that will be in need of extreme care. The Zika crisis has also demonstrated how care is intertwined with sexual and reproductive rights. It has implicated that without proper access to contraceptives and even the de-criminalization of abortion, the affected population will only increase. Poor women are the most impacted by this problem, deepening the cycle of poverty. The Zika crisis has also been linked to climate change and prolonged warm weather, lengthening the periods of time in which the vector is likely to survive and spread across larger geographic areas. Now, with the possible sexual transmission of Zika, contraceptives become an urgent dimension of public health and part of the mandate of the state to guarantee sexual and reproductive health and rights for all persons. Now, more than ever, we see the connections between the three dimensions of sustainable development and how the measures to address them need to be integrated.

These are the main recommendations for a comprehensive implementation of the 2030 Agenda. We certainly hope that these commitments are translated into a true change for the lives of all women all around the world.